First flood forecast test for Scotland

4 February 2011 - Emergency staff testing the new flood forecasting service for Scotland found themselves in a real-life situation this week.

During a crucial two-day emergency exercise, involving a flooding scenario in the west of Scotland, weather conditions deteriorated and the new Scottish Flood Forecasting Service (SFFS) team realised they were dealing with a potentially high impact flooding situation.

Alan Motion, Business Manager for the Met Office's services to Government in Scotland, said that what happened during the test illustrated exactly why the service is being set up in the first place.

Helping Scottish Government

The high risk of flooding caused Scottish Government to call the Scottish Government Resilience Room (SGoRR) into action. They were briefed by SFFS with a real-time Flood Guidance Statement - this will soon be available to all of Scotland's emergency planning community and emergency responders.

Alan added: "The actions of the SFFS team, even at this early stage, show the partnership is already working well and the wider resilience team is reaping the benefits from the investment by the Scottish Government."

SEPA's Flood Forecasting and Warning Manager, Michael Cranston, said: "Having the right experts, in the right place, providing high quality, practical flood forecasting information, at the right time for Scotland's emergency response community, is exactly what the SFFS is there to achieve. This was an excellent opportunity to test it in a real-life situation, while also testing use of the new Floodline direct warnings service, which goes live in late March."

Providing timely advice

Officially launched in March this year, this new service will provide emergency responders and the Scottish Government with a daily assessment of flood risk across Scotland. This will ensure the availability of robust and timely advice during flooding incidents and include a five-day forecast.

The Scottish Flood Forecasting Service (SFFS) is funded by the Scottish Government, and is a new partnership between the Met Office and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) .

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Last updated: 4 February 2011